Setting up of National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority

681. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are setting up a National Biotechnology Regulatary Authority to bring all agencies under one umbrella and introducing the idea of a "Conflict of Interest Agreement" with all stakeholders on decision making bodies;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the present status thereof, case-wise?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) Sir, the Task Force on "Applications of Agricultural Biotechnology" set up in May, 2004 by the Ministry of Agriculture has suggested for setting up of an autonomous statutory National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority (NBRA) with two separate wings- one for agricultural and food biotechnology and the other for medical and pharmaceutical biotechnology. The idea of a "Conflict of Interest Agreement" does not appear to be relevant in this context and is not part of the recommendations. The report of the Task Force has opined the NBRA is essential for generating necessary public, political, professional and commercial confidence in the science based regulatory mechanism in place in the country. Subsequently, the Draft National Biotechnology Development Strategy of the Department of Biotechnology has also endorsed it.

(c) The Ministry of Agriculture has mooted a Note for the Cabinet during April, 2006 for setting up of National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority after detailed discussion in the Committee of Secretaries (CoS).

Development of seeds for crops

†682. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether G.M. (genetically modified) seeds for crops are being developed;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the States and the research centres where these are being developed; and

(c) whether it will bring about a revolutionary change in the field of agriculture?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Efforts are continuing for developing genetically modified seeds for certain crops. In the various States, following research institutions are actively working in this direction:-

Andhra Pradesh -	Directorate of Rice Research, Hyderabad; University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad; Osmania University, Hyderabad; National Research Centre on Sorghum, Hyderabad; International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, Patancheru
Chhattisgarh -	Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya, Raipur
Delhi -	Indian Agricultural Research Institute; National Centre for Plant Genome Research, Jawaharlal Nehru University; University of Delhi, International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology; The Energy Research Institute
Haryana-	Ch. Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar; Directorate of Wheat Research, Karnal.
Himachal Pardesh -	Central Potato Research Institute, Shimla; Ch. Sarwan Kumar Himachal Pradesh Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya, Palampur; Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology, Palampur
Karnataka -	University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore; University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad; Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore; Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bangalore
Maharashtra -	Central Institute for Cotton Research, Nagpur; Bhaba Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai
Madhya Pradesh -	National Research Centre for Soybean, Indore;

	Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya, Jabalpur
Meghalaya -	ICAR Research Complex for North-East Region, Shillong
Orissa -	Central Rice Research Institute, Cuttack; Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology, Bhubaneshwar
Punjab -	Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana
Rajasthan -	National Research Centre on Rapeseed Mustard, Bharatpur
Tamil Nadu -	Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore and Madurai Kamraj University, Madurai
Uttar Pradesh -	National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow; Indian Institute of Vegetable Research, Varanasi; Indian Institure of Pulses Research, Kanpur
Uttaranchal -	Vivekanand Paravatiya Krishi Anusandhan Sansthan, Almora; Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar
West Bengal -	Bose institute, Kolkata and Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur.

In private sector, a few seed companies are also engaged in developing GM seeds and their field evaluation.

(c) Biotechnological interventions have enormous potential for developing crop varieties tolerant/resistant to various biotic and abiotic stresses, and supplementing the conventional breeding efforts. The GM crops have already benefited agriculture sector in some of the countries in the world. Therefore, it appears that GM crops have a lot of potential in improving the productivity of our crops.

Equipment for weather forecasts

683. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that after spending lots of money on purchase